

**Vermillion County Soil & Water Conservation District Meeting Minutes**  
**August 11th, 2026**

The Vermillion County SWCD Board of Supervisors met on August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026, at the Vermillion County Courthouse Auditorium

The following supervisors were present: Josh Bishop, Connie Warner, David Bishop, Carter Morgan.

Absent: LeeAnn Larrance

Staff members present: Eric Shideler, Chris Booe, Steven McGhee

Guests: Rachel Farrow, Hanna Garriott, Hailey Hendricks, Nathan Stoelting

**Call to order**

Connie Warner, chair, called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

**Minutes**

Minutes of the June meeting were reviewed. David Bishop moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Carter Morgan seconded. Motion carried.

**Accounts Payable Register and Treasurer's Report**

A printed financial report was provided by Eric. Carter Morgan moved to accept the financial report and all outstanding claims subject to audit. David Bishop seconded. Motion carried.

A claims report was provided to the Board. Carter Morgan moved to accept the claims report. David Bishop seconded. Motion carried.

**Staff Reports**

**NRCS-** Rachel Farrow reported that it was a very impressive year for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), considering the available funding for the year. In Vermillion County, three EQIP applications were submitted, with only one moving forward through the contracting process. She also reported that no Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) applications were funded in Vermillion County. Rachel noted that the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is still in the process of reorganizing.

**ISDA-** Hailey informed the Board that a new program has recently been established called IMAGE (Indiana Management of Agriculture Enhancements). IMAGE is a cost-share conservation funding initiative administered by the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) to help producers implement practical conservation improvements on their operations. Funding will be provided by ISDA to the Soil & Water Conservation District Office, which will then submit payments to the producers.

A motion was made by David Bishop for the Vermillion County SWCD to serve as the pass-through agency for IMAGE cost-share funds. Carter Morgan seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Nathan Stoelting informed the Board that there have been a few changes to the laws affecting Special Districts. At this time, sponsorships and advertising are no longer permitted to be paid for with district funds. ISDA is working to obtain further clarification regarding these changes.

Nathan Stoelting mentioned that the CWI Grants are coming due in September.

**FSA – None**

**Purdue-** Connie wanted to let everyone know that Vermillion Conservation Days are scheduled for September 18, 2026. She also announced that Wonders of the Wetlands is scheduled for September 30 and October 1, 2026, at Duke Energy.

**IASWCD-** Hanna also reported that she recently attended the SWCS meeting, which was held in St. Louis, Missouri. NRCS's new Chief, Buckley, was in attendance, and Hanna was able to meet one-on-one with Chief Buckley to explain how the program works. She wanted to bring the program to his attention so that he could potentially share it with others and encourage them to utilize the program.

**CRT-** Submitted written report.

**Director-** Submitted written report.

The Groundwater/Aquifer Education Event is tentatively scheduled for September 15, 2026. The location will be the Vermillion County Fairgrounds Community Building. One speaker, Stan Diamond, has already committed to participating. The Director is currently working to find a hydrologist to speak at the event.

The LARE Grant that was applied for in February 2026 has been awarded. This provides an additional \$35,000 in funding available within the Mill Creek Watershed in Vermillion County for conservation practices. The funding will provide another source of funding for land treatments.

The Director refreshed the Board on information discussed at a previous Board meeting in late 2024 regarding the Thriving Communities Grant Maker Program. The Director had applied for the grant and was notified at that time that there would be no funding available. Recently, the Director received an email stating that funding had become available and asking if he was still interested in applying. The Director replied that he was still interested, based on the Board's previous approval in late 2024.

The Director reported that the total grant amount is just under \$250,000. This is a no-match grant, so the SWCD will not be required to provide matching funds. The funds will be used to construct a Mobile Education Trailer and purchase the necessary supplies and equipment for the education unit. The grant will also provide funding for staff stipends, administrative fees, fringe benefits, and the County's liability for applicable taxes. The County would not have any financial investment in these stipends, as they would be based on projected work performed toward the grant.

Because this is a federal grant, indirect funds may also be claimed. These are non-discretionary funds that may be used by the SWCD at its discretion. One stipulation is that the funds must be spent by July 2027.

A motion was made by David Bishop for the Director to move forward with the Thriving Communities Grant Maker Program. Josh Bishop seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The Director reminded the Board that the Grain Bin Safety Event is scheduled for August 13, 2026, at the Vermillion County Fairgrounds Community Building. There will be two guest speakers, Anita Howard and Nathan Stoelting.

The Director presented the Board with dates for a series of regional listening sessions being held by DJ Case & Associates for District Supervisors. An office visit for staff only is scheduled for August 26, 2026.

The Director informed the Board that the local poster contest winners also received recognition as State poster contest winners. Their artwork is currently on display at the Indiana State Fair.

The Director presented the 2025 Conservation Implementation Report, which is published by ICP. The report showed that a total of \$920,142 in conservation funding came back to Vermillion County.

**Old Business-** None

## **New Business**

The IASWCD Region Supervisor Meeting is scheduled for September 1, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at the Linton Elks in Linton, Indiana. A motion was made by David Bishop to approve anyone who chooses to attend the North-Southwest Region Meeting and to cover the cost of attendance. Carter Morgan seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Seth Harden with The Nature Conservancy is proposing another Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) and is requesting letters of support from the counties that will be involved. The District provided a letter of support for Seth's RCPP proposal in 2025; however, this will be a new letter of support. The District's participation will be considered in-kind, with no monetary contribution required. There will be some staff time involved, along with promotional efforts.

A motion was made by Josh Bishop to provide a letter of support for Seth Harden's RCPP proposal. David Bishop seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The National No-Till Conference is scheduled for January 2027 and will be held in Indianapolis, Indiana. Steven McGhee has expressed interest in attending the conference. The registration fee is \$299 for the three-day conference.

A motion was made by Carter Morgan to approve any staff member or Board member to attend the National No-Till Conference in January 2027 and to cover the costs of registration, hotel accommodations, and meals. David Bishop seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The Indiana Technical Service Provider Training for Grazing and Pasture Management is scheduled for September 1–2, 2026, in Dubois, Indiana. This will be an overnight trip. The Director has been checking room rates, and the Best Western in French Lick, Indiana, has an estimated room rate of approximately \$120 per night. There is no registration fee for the training.

A motion was made by David Bishop to send Steven McGhee to the training on September 1–2, 2026, and to cover all associated costs. Carter Morgan seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The Director presented the Board with a draft of the Clean Water Indiana (CWI) Grant. The proposed grant would essentially be an extension of the successful Pollinator Program. The District is currently operating under an extension of its current CWI Grant, which was originally scheduled to end December 31, 2026. Due to additional Pollinator Program projects signing up this summer, the projects will not be able to be completed and finalized until June 2027. The State Soil Conservation Board granted the District an extension on the current grant.

The Director explained that the extension of the current grant does not prevent the District from applying for another CWI Grant for the 2027–2029 grant period. The proposed grant is primarily focused on continuing the Pollinator Program. The Director also noted that the grant proposal may be adjusted slightly if the Parke County Soil & Water Conservation District decides to add additional components to the grant.

A motion was made by David Bishop to accept the Clean Water Indiana (CWI) Grant proposal for the proposed project. Josh Bishop seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The Board discussed the appointment of the Supervisor Nominating Committee Chair. David Bishop nominated LeeAnn Larrance to serve as Chair of the Committee. Carter Morgan seconded the nomination. LeeAnn Larrance was appointed as Chair.

The Director will work with the Committee Chair to identify two (2) interested citizens to serve on the committee. The deadline to submit the names is October 2026.

The Director informed the Board that the IDEA Conference is scheduled for October 7–9, 2026, at Pokagon State Park. The registration fee is \$150 per person for members and \$200 per person for non-members.

A motion was made by David Bishop to cover all costs for staff members who choose to attend the conference. Josh Bishop seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**Other New Business:**

A motion was made by Josh Bishop to provide resources for the Elanco Health Fair and to provide a prize basket for the daily prize drawing. David Bishop seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**Public Comment-** None

Carter Morgan moved to adjourn. Josh Bishop seconded. Motion carried.

With no additions or corrections, the minutes were approved on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2026.

Carter Morgan \_\_\_\_\_

Josh Bishop \_\_\_\_\_

LeeAnn Larrance \_\_\_\_\_

David Bishop \_\_\_\_\_

Connie Warner \_\_\_\_\_